

four

Quarters

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The Editors accordingly offer the pages of **FOUR QUARTERS** as a common ground for the creative, critical, or scholarly writer and the alert and reflective reader. They promise that each manuscript submitted will receive careful consideration, and, realizing that creative growth is dependent on sustained interest, they welcome the attention and comments of their subscribers.

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King of the Hill

• Riley Hughes

THE THREE PAIRS of eyes held hatred. Philip felt for a grotesque moment that his aunt would glare at him forever, and that he and she would grow old and gray together, staring. Philip giggled. Bootsie looked with a glassy-eyed, hot contempt on them both, and then maneuvered her oily rump slowly backwards, preparing to leave her chair. "See, you've frightened her," the aunt said, turning her face accusingly from Philip to the dog. Philip laughed unpleasantly.

"Did 'im hurt oos feelings?" Aunt Helen said, hauling Bootsie's limp twenty pounds into her arms.

"I said they were at me again today." Philip's voice was silky with menace.

"He expects sympathy from us," Aunt Helen said to the dog. She held Bootsie's muzzle in her curled hand and shook the dog's head slowly. "Bootsie can't think what to make of it," she announced.

"Tell her, Bootsie," the boy said with exasperation and without humor, "that I'm going out, and I'll be back when I'm good and ready."

"Bootsie says you'd better be back here by six o'clock. Sharp. You little hero."

He turned his back on them. Then he stood for a moment, relishing the thought that Aunt Helen and Bootsie were blotted from his sight. Annihilated too were the shapeless overstuffed chair with its three embroidered doilies and the mahogany table and its cut-glass dish and the

three books of verse bound in imitation leather. His aunt was saying "humph" without conviction. Bootsie's claws went *tlat-tlat* as she jumped to the floor. His aunt's mood had changed easily from indignation to self-pity, and Philip glanced back uneasily to see the tears rolling off the dark craters around her eyes. "Only Bootsie loves me." He went out.

His aunt's words were still ringing in his ears. He was conscious not only of that fact but of the words that described it. He decided the sensation he felt could accurately be called "ringing." "You little hero," Philip repeated. He kicked viciously at clumps of dirty snow in the yard.

The week had begun badly. Promptly at 8:25 Monday morning several boys of his own age had trapped him in a corner of the school yard. They had not offered him any violence—that time—but little by little they had reduced the arc they formed around him. Their feet shuffled as they kept ranks. They came closer and closer. When they were just outside the range of his arms they stopped. He could see no signal, yet he had the feeling somehow that the thing was arranged.

"He kicks," one of the boys announced wearily.

Philip's leg convulsed involuntarily. He moved slightly forward, but that was all.

Nobody spoke. Philip looked out at them from his lair, more in disbelief than apprehension. He

climbed, without turning his back to them, onto the snow-packed base-board of the wooden fence. Then he waited for them to close in.

"The stinker wants us to hit him!" somebody said. "He enjoys it."

Philip did not pause to consider this interpretation of his behavior. When they had first come toward him he had been thinking of Saint Sebastian. In the principal's office there was a huge painting of Sebastian, with five arrows sticking in his left side and six sticking in his right. But now he was not thinking of anything at all. He simply was not there, nor were they. He did not defy them; they did not exist.

Suddenly the bell rang. The circle around Philip melted quickly, and after a moment he joined them in the boys' line. He started to speak to one of the boys near him, but the other turned away.

Tuesday at the noon recess he was jumped by two boys he did not remember ever having seen before. He took a spare handkerchief from his left jacket pocket and wiped off his bleeding nose and cheek. He had not fought back.

On the way from school on Tuesday three of his classmates chased Philip home. He ran ahead of them silently and with even, contemptuous strides. When they reached Barton Street Philip slowed down to a brisk walk. At the corner of Branch Avenue, at the overhead traffic light, he waited. The others walked past him. "I live at home with my Aunt Helen," he heard one of them say. "And on the wall of the sit-ting room we have a Persian schamilitar," said another.

Philip cringed as though he had been struck. Last week in English class he had been called on for "free oral recitation." He had talked effortlessly for over ten minutes on "My Life at Home." Instead of a framed motto saying "Home Sweet Home" there was, he revealed importantly, a Persian schamilitar on the wall. The jewels were missing from the handle, he admitted. His teacher, he saw from her impatient gesture of plucking at her sleeve, had wanted to stop him. But he had rattled on, painting with broad, satiric strokes a picture of a beautiful, talented woman devoted to her nephew. At this point the teacher was called out of the room. Philip dismissed her with a cheerful nod, and before she could dispose of the class in any other way, plunged again into his story. He invented a dentist (whom he was careful to keep anonymous) who came to court his aunt. He described the dentist's extravagant attention to Bootsie and told how he would pop chocolates into Bootsie's mouth from across the room.

The "schamilitar" business rankled the most. When he had given a carefully edited version of his recitation to Aunt Helen that evening she had laughed at him until she had to dab her eyes with her lace handkerchief to keep the tears back. "Bootsie," she had said, "you must always pronounce the word *scimitar*." She had spelled the word out for Bootsie. Philip had been too angry to make a note of the spelling at the time and had to look it up later.

Wednesday it snowed, and he was almost late for school. Aside

from a scuffle in the cloak room which resulted in Philip's having to retrieve one of his rubbers from the anteroom to the principal's office, nothing happened. By the end of school the snow had turned to a light drizzle of rain. He made a detour to the Rock, his name for an abrupt hill a half mile from the school. Here he kept a few belongings—some matchbook covers, a jack-knife too rusted for him to open, three Canadian coins, and a desk calendar—in a tin can. When he fitted the rim into the right position he could read the words "Vacuum Packed." The can had contained peanuts. It still gave off a faint odor. He lifted up the stone which concealed his treasure and checked everything. Nothing was missing.

Today was Thursday. When he'd returned home from school he reported in an off-hand, impersonal way as many of the day's events as he cared to relate. He always told, with meticulous detail and as though reporting something at which he was a disinterested bystander, when somebody had been "at him." Sometimes he would speak directly to Bootsie. Without descending to the "dog language" his aunt usually insisted on, he would give Bootsie a detailed account. He always folded her paws and made her sit in a special way. Today he had but one incident to report: in the corridor a boy had pushed him over the crouching back of another. He'd acted it out for Bootsie and had more probably bored than frightened her. But Bootsie had begun to whine and shift uneasily, and Aunt Helen had rushed into the room gesticulating

wildly with a piece of embroidery enclosed in round wooden hoops.

If he had to be back by six, he thought, he could make it to the Rock and back. He returned to the back hall for his galoshes. As he was bending the metal clasps into position he decided to leave every other one unlatched. He liked the mingled effect of tidiness and untidiness, and he found that his walking was not impeded.

He decided to pay a visit to the schoolyard, for it lay on the shortest route between his aunt's house and the Rock. There had been a persistent snowfall early the week before, and there were piles of snow in the schoolyard. With a glad leap he mounted on a snow wall thrown against the fence. He pretended to lose his balance. Occasionally he would jump through the more loosely packed parts of the mound of snow. "I'm king of the hill," he said aloud over and over again. Once he looked sharply behind him, for he thought he heard a snicker. There was no one.

He went over to the boys' rear door. When he got to the top of the steps he could look into Room 2A and see the clock. He peered through the paper Pilgrims and pumpkins, now ruckled and faded, pasted to the window. The clock said four-thirty. He would have plenty of time to get to the Rock and yet be home by six.

He walked on alternate sides of the street all the way, on the right for a block, then on the left. There were not many people out. A few automobiles were making their way cautiously on the highway.

His cache—he pronounced the word as though it had two syllables—was safe. He removed one of the coins and put it in his pocket. Although he rummaged through his jacket pockets he could find nothing new to add to his hoard. "I'm king of the hill," he said quietly to himself as he carefully fitted the top of the can in such a way that the letters on the rim and on the can itself would not quite come together.

After he buried the can once more and smoothed the snow around it, he came over to the edge of the hill. He stood near a stump and surveyed his territory. The road curled beneath him like a scimitar. It was a good three hundred feet from where he stood.

He noticed with some contempt that the one or two people walking below in the rapidly graying light were bent slightly forward with the effort of tramping through the snow. They looked like bugs to him. He ran over the list of bugs he knew and decided on beetles. They were beetles. One or two slightly larger beetles crawled more quickly than the human ones. One of the cars had its headlights on, though it was scarcely dark enough for that.

He was tiring of this game, and he decided to turn down the path again toward home. He towered over the scene, straining forward to impress everything in his memory. He saw that there were just two automobiles now, one coming from the right and one off to the left. It occurred to him that he could see both cars, but it would be another minute or so before they saw each other.

"Let them hit," he said suddenly, aloud. He peered down at them. He whispered an ejaculation. "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph," he breathed, spacing his words evenly. He would close his eyes tight while he counted three, and then open them.

The bugs came together. The one from the right seemed to do a slow dance around the side of the other and then it turned over. He could hear nothing. Somebody at the scene of the accident thought he saw a small figure move near the top of the hill, but he could not be sure. When he glanced up again, he could make out nothing but a rotted stump and gray patches of snow that looked as though they had been trampled on.

Resurrection on a Shiny Morning

● Dan Rodden

I have known mornings to shine
Lucent, with a knowledgeable light;
Mornings meaning more of what was mine
And what you were, than ever I knew at night.
Mornings down a street, or in a field,
When somehow most of everything was clear;
And these were cool and shiny mornings, yielding
Confidence against our evening fear.

Idea vs. Symbol

● Howard A. Wiley

IT SEEMS TO ME that if the central problem of the artist, literary and otherwise, could be compressed into one sentence, that sentence would be something like this: the central problem of the artist is to communicate the most subjective experiences most effectively to the most percipients.

Standing thus alone in its undefined opacity, this equation of superlatives appears barren and obscure. In order to elucidate it, we must unravel the strands of reasoning that lie coiled up in it.

We can begin most happily, I think, with the strand that lies behind the word "communicate." We know, if we have ever tried to tell anybody anything more subtle than the route to the postoffice, that communication between individuals is extremely difficult except on the most superficial levels. This difficulty is not immediately apparent because people have devised a large number of symbols (chiefly words) to which they respond similarly. If I say "cat" I can be reasonably sure that my hearer forms a mental image similar to my own. Thus I am able to discuss cats without fearing that he thinks I am talking about dogs.

But these common symbols, despite their remarkable capacities, suffer severe limitations. They fail to communicate in direct proportion to the subjectivity of what is expressed. The word "cat" represents a common object that both my percipient and myself are ordinarily familiar with. But many objects and experiences, particularly inner states of mind and subjective responses, have no exact symbols corresponding to them that will be readily understood by both the communicant and the percipient.

There is, of course, a large category of symbols designed to convey inner states of mind and subjective responses. Such symbols as sighs, gestures, facial expressions, postures, colors, sounds, and words like "love," "hate," "fear," "joy," etc. do manage to convey—roughly and inexactly—certain familiar and universal subjective conditions. But even these symbols fail most where the artist most needs them: in the communication of the different, the distinctive, and the unique.

This leads us to the next term in the equation, "the most subjective experiences." Every individual, in the complex of personal characteristics and peculiar experiences that he brings to the creation and perception of art, is unique. In some respects his personality, his attributes, his outlook are different from those of every other individual. And these differences, summed up as uniqueness, are the most valuable attributes he possesses. When the individual is an artist, the distinction of his attitudes, the freshness of his outlook, the special quality of his responses are the most valuable things he can communicate.

This uniqueness is, first of all, valuable to himself. It is the attribute

that sets him off distinctly from the "otherness" of his life, that gives him his separateness, his individuality, and thus his reality in the midst of the total flux of which he is a part. It is this individuality (of experiences, of responses, of attitudes) that is the ultimate value that he can convey as an artist.

For the percipient of art, this uniqueness in the artist has value because—if the artist can communicate it—it gives the percipient knowledge and insight that he can get in no other way, from no other source. What is common to all life and accessible to every individual, he can acquire without help. But what is peculiar to the individual beside him, he can acquire only if that individual is able to communicate it to him.

Thus the value of artistic material increases as its subjectivity and uniqueness increase. But the difficulty of communicating it also increases in direct proportion to these attributes. The more unique the artist's material, the fewer common symbols he finds available to evoke a response in the percipient similar to his own responses to the experiences of life.

This problem, which is fundamental to all art, sets up a two-way tension within the field of the artist's creative activity. It imposes on him two essentially contradictory motives. One is to express the distinctively personal and individual aspects of his experience. This naturally draws him away from those symbols that communicate most widely and readily. The other motive is to communicate as widely and effectively ("to the most percipients") as possible; and this motive draws him away from the distinctive and unique material in his experience.

Some aestheticians may deny that both these motives need to be present *simultaneously* in the creative process. But I do not see how art can be created with either of them lacking.

The "artist" who foregoes the unique and distinctive in his material actually foregoes art. It is one of the essential characteristics of a work of art that it conveys a quality of experience; and as experience can only take place within the individual, who brings a unique response to it, a quality of experience can only be conveyed through the communication of unique personal experience. Every true work of art is the result of translating "new" material—that is, the fresh, different experience of the artist—into intelligible terms. To the extent that the so-called artist falls short of this distinctiveness, to that extent he falls short of art. The "artist" who merely learns the teachable techniques of art and then draws the content of his work—the material of his "art"—from the common fund of plots, themes, ideas and situations, is only a carpenter. He gets his wood from the lumber yard. The true artist grows his own trees. Until the unique in the artist's experience becomes the material of his work, the result is only cabinet-making.

But communication is just as essential to art as *self-expression*. Again, the "artist" is not really an artist unless he communicates something intelligible. It may be argued in some quarters that pure self-expression,

unadulterated by objective intelligibility, is a sufficient artistic purpose. But this is a contradiction in terms. True art is an objective reality. To be art the created object must exist for two individuals. But nothing exists for two individuals—in this case the creator and the percipient—until it is intelligible to both of them. The “artist” who restricts himself to unintelligible self-expression—because his experiences are too ineffable to communicate—may produce “art” in his own mind, but he does not produce art for anyone else. His “art” has no objective characteristics, no symbols that are intelligible to another, no externalized meaning. Therefore it has no impact on this other. It fails to communicate, and thus is deprived of the most valuable attribute art possesses—the ability to bridge the gap between the experience of one individual and another.

If it is true, then, that these two contradictory motives contend in the artist’s field of creative activity, our original equation becomes more intelligible. The central problem of the artist is to discover a *balance of maximums* between these two motives, to establish an equal tension between them. In other words, he seeks to communicate his *most* subjective experiences *most* effectively to the *most* percipients.

If the balance between these two intentions is upset, the artistic product is cheapened. When too much weight is given to communicability, we get imitative repetitions of previously objectified experience—the trite and the banal. When too much weight is given to subjectivity, we get the unintelligible gibberish of the uncommunicated self, the finger-painting and the poems consisting of commas.

The artist’s first task, therefore, is to know himself. He must choose, either intuitively or reflectively, those experiences, responses and attitudes that are most distinctive to him. He must find in himself that quality of experience (which comes through in his work as style) that is most exclusively his own. He must cultivate honesty and originality of outlook, so that he does not fall into the fatal pit of borrowing his responses from those made available to him by models. He must borrow only those techniques that enable him to convey his own responses.

Once this distinctive material has been mined from the welter of his total experience, his next problem becomes the choice of symbols (or the creation of symbols) that will communicate this material most completely to the most percipients. And the more original and distinctive his experiences are, the more difficult this is. But he cannot yield—either to the ready recesses of unintelligible self-expression or to the adulteration of the distinctive by the choice of the easy, common symbols.

There can be no avoiding the fact that something must be sacrificed in the course of this arduous and exacting process. The effort to communicate as thoroughly and widely as possible is bound to reduce the distinctiveness of the basic material. And the effort to hold on to the distinctiveness of the basic material is certain to restrict the scope of its intelligibility. But it is a measure of the great artist that he can attain the maximum communicability of the most distinctive material of his private experience.

Double Skull, Slow Burn, and a Ping

• Joe Coogan

THE CHRISTMAS ENTERTAINMENT given annually by the eighth grade class of St. Theodosia's grammar school in Philadelphia was not an occasion noted for gay and untrammelled revelry. It was usually a sedately religious and pretty dull affair, but the year my brother Willie was in the cast the whole thing acquired a peculiar air of sly debauchery.

Willie referred to it later (much later; he wouldn't let anyone mention it for years) as "that time I dragged a naked woman on stage." This, as you will see, was not a precise description of what happened. But it was close enough.

The year that my brother performed, the direction of the show was under new management. The old eighth grade teacher had been transferred and her place was taken by a plump, middle-aged nun named Sister Rose Anita. She was a genial woman with a round pleasant face, and she carried herself with a certain blithe assurance. An assurance, one felt, that could not be shattered by anything she considered less formidable than the Crack of Doom. The Crack of Doom occurred in the latter part of October.

Sister was in class giving a spirited talk on the adjectival clause when a boy from one of the lower grades knocked on the door, entered and handed her a small slip of paper. She assigned us some written work

to do and left the room. She came back a changed woman. Her face was pale and drawn, and her eyes had a hunted, furtive expression. After she dismissed the class, she called me over to her desk. She drummed her fingers on the desk top and spoke in a low, distracted monotone.

"Joseph," she said, "unexpected development. Must get to the library this afternoon. Important research. I want you to come with me. Help carry some material." She stood up, squared her shoulders, and marched determinedly out of the room. I followed, carrying her brief case.

Inside the library, her courage faltered. She walked slowly over to the drama section and stared irresolutely at the long crowded shelves. With a pathetic attempt at briskness, she snatched several books at random, read off the titles, and handed them to me. They had names like: *Frolics for Young Folks*, *Pageants Can Be Fun*, and *The Fourth Wall in Restoration Comedy*. She took out the maximum number allowed and went into the periodical room.

"Young man," she said to the clerk, "do you have any authoritative publication that deals with the production of plays?"

The clerk said that he had. He went back to the files and returned with several thick, heavily bound

volumes of newspapers which he placed on a nearby table. Sister sat down, opened one of them, and for the first time that afternoon she smiled.

"Variety," she said, "journal of stage, screen and radio. Why, this may be exactly what I want!" She began to read and her smile stiffened into an expression of perplexed astonishment.

"You may go, Joseph," she said. "I think I'll be here for some time."

When I left, her head was bent low over the library table and her forefinger moved slowly across the page in front of her.

Sister Rose Anita went to the library every afternoon after that, and gradually her old assurance reappeared. But with a difference. Her voice seemed to have become more assertive, she frequently made obscure references to bygone vaudeville acts, and she began to speak in a strange idiom.

One afternoon, a few weeks before Entertainment time, she stopped me in the hall.

"Joseph," she said, "as a member of the eighth grade you will naturally be expected to take part in the show. This year, however, I'm permitting a slight departure from the rules. I want you and your younger brother William to act together as a unit, a team."

"Are we going to be wise men?" I asked.

"Certainly not. You're going to be elves." She leaned forward and her voice became quietly confidential. "At long last," she said, "Saint Theodosia's is going Broadway. You

can assure your brother William that our little effort will be very sockeroo." She winked and waddled swiftly down the hall.

My brother was nine years old at the time, and in the fifth grade. A thin kid with a mop of unruly brown hair and a long mobile face, he had a high reputation as a mimic (his Durante imitation was particularly well thought of), and it was probably this that led to the singular honor of his being picked for a speaking part in the show. Although a few of the first and second grade girls were occasionally used as extras, this was the first time that anyone not in the graduating class had a leading role. Willie was quite set up about it.

"What the hell," he said, "it's better than watching the old thing." He swore a lot when he was excited, a habit he picked up from my father.

A few days after Sister Rose Anita stopped me in the hall, we met in the eighth grade classroom for our first rehearsal. When we were all seated Sister took a large sheaf of papers from her brief case and paced rapidly back and forth in the front of the room.

"Boys and girls," she said, "we have a lot of work ahead of us if we're going to make this year's Entertainment smash hit material. I've already taken steps. Instead of the usual show, I've arranged to offer our audience a double feature. This should be a pleasant innovation as double bills gross high on main stem." She smiled brightly. "We open with a short one-act play which we're going to follow with a fine two-

act musical comedy. I'm going to read the play and I want everyone to pay very close attention. I'm sure it has an important message for each one of us."

The play was an educational skit put out by a local dental society and entitled, "A Tooth's Best Friend." It concerned the St. Clair-Uncle Tom-like relationship between one Ancient Molar, member of a proud old tooth family, and Brush, a faithful family retainer. After a rather promising beginning ("Hello, Tooth" "Hello, Brush"), it became sentimentally maudlin and ended with Tooth weeping melodramatically on Brush's shoulder. Sister read it very effectively.

"That will be all for now, children," she said when she had finished. "I haven't time to go over the musical."

As Willie and I were leaving, she beckoned to us.

"I almost forgot," she said. "I have something very important to tell you two." We came back into the room.

"The musical," she said, "is about two elves getting the toys ready for Santa Claus." She pointed to my brother. "You, William, will be elf number one. You're mischievous, spritely, alert. Joseph, you're elf number two—slow, dull witted, but all in all very sincere. You're a foil for William, the minor comedian. What we call the second banana."

Willie and I stared bewilderedly at each other.

"In the second act," she continued, "you have a series of lines which are certain to get a very well defined yak." She handed us a paper and

pointed to the top of the page. "Read from here," she said.

Willie had the first line.

"Well, elf," he began, "did you get the Flit gun ready so we can spray the—"

"Reindeer," Sister prompted.

"Reindeer?"

"Flit?" I said. "Why do you want to spray Flit on the reindeer?"

"Why, so they'll be able to flit over the rooftops, of course!" my brother said.

When Sister Rose Anita finished laughing she turned to me.

"That line's guaranteed to fracture them," she said. "Especially, Joseph, when you top it off with a double skull, slow burn, and a ping."

"Is that something elves do?" I asked.

"It's what almost any comedian who is what we call a B.O. draw can do. I'll show you. William, read the line again."

My brother read the line. Sister walked quickly away from him, scowled, looked back twice (the double skull), ran her right hand slowly over her face (slow burn), jumped up and threw both hands high in the air (the ping).

"Try it," she said.

I did, and it gave me a lot of trouble. I still can't do it very well.

On Entertainment Day the cast met in the auditorium about an hour before curtain time. With the exception of Nell Lacey, a fat nervous girl with a deep voice who played Santa Claus, my brother and I were the most impressively outfitted members of the group. My mother had

despaired of making elves' suits and had rented them from a local costumer. Willie wore a long green coat, green tights, and a high pointed hat. I had the same outfit in brown. The girls in the chorus of dolls were swathed in some thin gauze-like material and the boys who represented toy soldiers were dressed simply in white shirts and slacks. A few wore medals.

As Willie and I walked through the auditorium, we were stopped by a lean, somber-looking kid named Harry Snyder. Snyder (Ancient Molar) had on a white cloth hat that vaguely resembled a tooth and he wore a long fuzzy grey beard. He inspected us critically.

"You look pretty silly," he said, but we could tell he was jealous.

Sister Rose Anita lined us up and placed each one in his correct position either on or off stage. This was important as the stage was a shallow one with no crossover in back. On the left side there was a door leading to the main building and a screen which shielded the curtain puller. Offstage right was shaped like a large square box with one opening which led directly to the playing area.

As we took our places we could hear the menacing murmur of the helplessly reluctant audience being herded into the narrow auditorium.

After Sister had us arranged properly she made a final check on each costume. When she came to me, she frowned.

"Technically speaking, Joseph," she said, "you're not really an elf at all. You're a brownie." Snyder sneered.

Sister started to say something else but she was interrupted by the voices of children singing the school song. They sounded surly.

"On your toes, boys and girls," she said. "Monsignor Blake has arrived." Monsignor Blake was the local pastor and the perennial honored guest at these functions.

When the singing died down Sister gave us a few final instructions. "Remember now, make it big, loud, and wait for the laughs." She walked over to the prompter's chair at stage right.

The opening skit was played in front of the curtain to desultory applause. Brush and Tooth came offstage. Sister Claire, the music teacher, played a few introductory chords on the piano and the musical began.

Willie and I had the first song.
"We're Santa's helpers. We're true
blue,
Elf number one, and elf number
two.
We work with paint and nails and
glue,
So that the toys will get to you,
Early Christmas morning."

We did a rapid, shuffling dance, stopped and bowed deeply. There wasn't a sound from the front of the house.

After about ten minutes of light banter punctuated by long and silence-filled pauses for laughs, we wound up the toy soldiers and they paraded around the stage for awhile. Then Willie grabbed a large, rouge-filled paint can and scampered over to the dolls.

"Paint 'em on the cheek, and paint

'em quick. Gotta get ready for Old Saint Nick," he said.

His voice sounded loud and ill-tempered. I could tell he was ruffled by the lack of audience response.

He dipped a large brush in the can and capered fantastically down the row of dolls, patting each one lightly on the cheek and then skipping wildly to the next. He was putting his heart into it.

The last doll in line, a little wide-eyed first grade girl, watched this antic progress with considerable misgiving. When he leaned over to tap her on the cheek with the brush, she let out a terrified shriek and raced frantically away from him. Willie, reaching out to stop her, caught the skirt of her light gauze dress. There was a soft tearing sound and the panic-stricken child, clad only in brief panties, stood petrified in the center of the stage. The audience cheered.

One of the older girls picked up the denuded doll and carried her offstage.

Willie dropped the paint can, walked stiffly and mechanically over to me and grabbed me by the shoulder. His eyes had a blank, horrified look and his hand trembled.

"What did you do with the Flit?" he shouted.

This dexterous leap from the opening to the climax of Act Two was more than I could cope with.

"Flit?" I asked weakly.

"To make them flit better, dopey," he said.

I remembered the routine. I glared at him, walked away and looked back. His next line was spoken in a loud, clear voice.

"You forgot the damn ping," he said.

The audience was hushed in awe-struck wonder. Although I could see and hear what was going on with almost preternatural acuteness, I felt powerless to speak or move and could only stare at him with an expression of slack-jawed idiocy. This seemed to unnerve him.

Sister Rose Anita bounced angrily out of the prompter's chair and pointed to the chorus.

"Sing," she said. "For heaven's sake, sing!"

Willie, who by this time was in a state approaching madness, thought she was pleading with him. He ran through a quick and rather skillful chorus of "Inka Dinka Doo" and then began the only other song he knew, an Irish come-all-ye that he had picked up from my grandfather.

"She was a great big lump of an Irish agricultural girl, and oh, how I'd like to tie her garter," were the opening words. Sister Claire played "Holy Night" on the piano, loudly.

Sister Rose Anita kept shouting, "Curtain! Curtain!" but to no avail. She seized Harry Snyder, shouted something to him, and pushed him in the direction of stage left.

When Snyder got in front of the audience, he did his duty as he saw it. He stood at attention and his face assumed a haughty, aristocratic look.

"The thief of time cannot destroy my treasure trove of calcium!" he said. It was his big speech from the one-act play.

Sister Rose Anita rushed over to Nell Lacey and tried to force her

on stage. Meanwhile old Ancient Molar was giving it all he had.

"Oh, faithful squire of every stalwart tooth,

Brave Brush, you do not deign to stand aloof,

But help avert life's sad decaying end.

You are, in truth, brave Brush—a tooth's best friend," he said.

Sister Rose Anita did a perfectly executed slow burn and a ping. Then, infected by the general lunacy of the moment, she snatched the Santa Claus mask from Nell Lacey, held it over her face with one hand and raced across the stage.

"Merry Christmas, elves! Merry Christmas, toys! Merry Christmas, children!" she said. When she reached stage left, she pulled the curtain and leaned heavily against the wall. The mask had dropped to the floor; she shook her head slowly from side to side and her eyes were filled with tears.

"What a turkey. What a flop-eroo," she said dispiritedly.

A few members of the cast muttered some semi-articulate words of commiseration but most of us stood glumly silent, envisioning God knows what dark reprisals that were

bound to follow the afternoon's performance.

The only sounds from the auditorium were the slow, threatening footsteps of Monsignor Blake as he approached the stage to give his annual Christmas speech. He was an old man with a tired, dour face (I had only seen him at Entertainment time) and he had a reputation as a stern disciplinarian. Our only hope was that he wouldn't expel us publicly.

"My dear children," he began and his voice had a strange, choked quality. "I'm sure we're all greatly edified by the amount of time and energy put into today's performance. I suggest we show our appreciation by applause."

The house went wild. There were cheers, whistles, shouts, and long sustained clapping.

"What the hell," my brother said, "we're a hit!"

Sister Rose Anita glared at him but as the applause mounted her eyes became soft and dreamy and she threw her head back proudly.

"You see, boys and girls, you never can tell," she said. "That's show biz. It most certainly is show biz."

We took five curtain calls.

Wedding Song

© Leo Brady

With this ring
Upon this hand
Everything
Men understand
By love, affection,
Honor, I
In full perfection
Signify.

May this priest,
Though our words falter,
Bless this feast
Which on this altar
Makes this daughter
Wifely mine
And turns all water
Into wine.

Seascape

● Claude F. Koch

Hibiscus pale
Pink in the swale
Swart meadowmarsh
Before the sea,
This sink of rank
Salt-wiry grass
Matted tawney,
Fringe the spit
Tanged by a northwind
Over it;
Cluttered wrack
And slotted whorl
Of cockle shell
In limpid light

High sea lashing
A buoy bell

O wish us well
O wish us well

Who ship the tides
Beyond that knell,
Beyond the sight
Of buoy light,

Of any light

Beyond landswell
Beyond the sail
Penned in well
Penned by gale
To the port of pale

Hibiscus.

What About "God and Man"?

A Symposium

Chairman: E. Russell Naughton

God and Man at Yale is a book by a recent graduate of Yale, which centers upon the matter of academic freedom at that university. The author is young but the problems are as old as education itself. **FOUR QUARTERS** presents this symposium on the subject matter of the book because of the universality of the problems, and the fact that the book has aroused wide interest. Three students of La Salle were asked to discuss the book; their discussion is presented below in dialogue form. Next, individuals on the faculty were asked to comment on the book in terms of their specialized fields, and these remarks follow the students' dialogue.

There is a problem regarding the evaluation of *God and Man at Yale*: what is to be the basis of such an evaluation? The author himself offers four points to be considered: the teaching of religion, the teaching of economics, the control of an institution of higher education by the alumni, and academic freedom. It seems that the basis of evaluation must be shifted as it is applied to each of the four points. Moreover, the participants in this symposium are Catholics and they are writing in a Catholic magazine. However, the reader will find that the problems are seriously considered and that the basis of the evaluation will be found in terms of what ought to be done, what ought not to be done, and what is done, in both sectarian and non-sectarian institutions.

Student Round Table:

(Dialogue transcribed by Charles J. Fulforth, Senior English Major)

PAUL J. MCGINNIS (*Junior Education Major*): The book, *God and Man at Yale*, seems to be well done from a journalistic point of view—the points are forcefully presented and supported by facts.

JOSEPH G. MCLEAN (*Senior English Major*): I agree.

THOMAS J. BLESSINGTON (*Senior Business Administration Major*): I also agree, but the fact is, Buckley went to extremes in his crusade for the revival of individualism. We have to ascertain whether there is an undue distortion here or whether the emphasis was necessary in order to achieve the purpose of the book. I believe it was necessary and proper.

McGINNIS: Well, I don't think Buckley treated of the conditions at Yale very objectively, and I think that objectivity is a necessary virtue in a work of this sort.

McLEAN: I am not inclined to agree with you. Buckley is right in believing that something is sorely wrong with our present educational set-up. I think that he has done a fine job in unveiling many of the specific evils in the system in vogue today in so many of our colleges.

McGINNIS: That may be, and if the author were consistent in his own viewpoint, I would be willing to concede the validity of his method. However, I find many inconsistencies in Mr. Buckley's position. I say there is a contradiction between Christianity and pure individualism—in religious as well as economic and political matters.

McLEAN: Well, I admit that this is a weak point in Buckley's position and I certainly do not agree with his individualism.

BLESSINGTON: Why not discuss the teaching of religion at Yale first?

McLEAN: I am willing to do so and I point out that if Yale is a sectarian school and teaches (or tries to inculcate in the student) the belief that one religion is the true one, then it would be a breach of trust for the administration to expose the bulk of the students to a teacher whose lack of religious conviction could harmfully influence even one student even slightly.

BLESSINGTON: It seems to me that Yale must be considered a non-sectarian school today, even though it did begin under the auspices of a particular religious group.

McLEAN: This may be in line with what Buckley calls their teaching of religion as a cultural phenomenon. But, if this is the case, then no attempt should be made to establish any given set of religious values.

BLESSINGTON: Then the religion courses should be placed in the history department as history courses. If a course be called a religion course, it should deal with morality and the like, and this brings up some kind of religious values.

McGINNIS: I would consent to the teaching of a course in comparative religion as a history course—as a matter of fact, I think much profit could be derived from such a course. Obviously, though, there must be regular religion courses as well.

McLEAN: Theoretically, an atheist might give a more objective course in comparative religion.

BLESSINGTON: Students do look up to the teacher as a guide, and there is a danger in having irreligious teachers handling religion courses. Of course there is bound to be anti-religious prejudices in the teachers of other subjects—it would be impossible to exclude all of these in a non-sectarian institution.

McLEAN: The problem of teachers influencing students is indeed a serious one and I think it can be judged only on the basis of the integrity of the individual teachers. An atheist would lack integrity as a teacher only when he has allowed his own personal prejudices and biases to intrude upon the subject matter of the course.

McGINNIS: Of course, snide anti-religious remarks of a teacher would do little harm were a student to take them with a grain of salt.

BLESSINGTON: Such remarks might also arouse the competitive spirit in some students; encourage comments and discussion; and, perhaps, benefit everyone.

McLEAN: The question of the personal bias of some teachers is only a facet of the central problem Buckley feels Yale is facing. The real problem is the overall rejection of religion as a vital influence. Certainly, if what Buckley reports is true, no difference of opinion is presented to the student on this matter, for there seems to be a common front against religion in many areas of instruction.

McGINNIS: That seems to be true, but the religious services at Yale seem to be as well attended as many of the same kind at our Catholic colleges—here at La Salle we do not have crowded chapel services.

BLESSINGTON: The difference between Yale and La Salle seems to be in the type of student attending the services, since religious services seem to be more of a social function at Yale, and so attendance gives social stature.

McLEAN: I would like to move on to the economic aspects of Buckley's book. Although I would object to the one-sided views Buckley sees as offered to the unwary student by Yale's economics department, I cannot accept Buckley's solution. In attacking what he considers an extreme condition, he proposes that another extreme replace it.

BLESSINGTON: Buckley does seem to feel that anything to the left of Taft is too far to the left.

McGINNIS: I am convinced that the extreme individualism which Buckley proposes is a very materialistic one, despite the contentions of Buckley to the contrary.

McLEAN: I agree with you on that. The tenor of the whole section dealing with economics seems to deny the value of making ethical judgments on economic activities. For Buckley, the law of supply and demand equates what is done and what *should* be done. Remove social control (such as government regulation), permit *laissez-faire* economics, then the basis of all activity becomes man's own selfish desire. This position is untenable for me.

McGINNIS: Common sense demands some type of government control.

BLESSINGTON: Then we stand unanimously opposed to Buckley's economic views. We also stand opposed to the treatment of economics from just the collectivist viewpoint—as seems to be the case at Yale, according to Buckley.

McLEAN: I particularly disliked Buckley's inference that government regulation always brings concomitant loss of freedom. In England, for example, a new party was elected to office despite the fact that a socialistic group was in power at that time. There never is a loss of real freedom if the people are alert.

McGINNIS: Turning to the problem of the alumni, I wish to say that I don't believe that the power to control college policy should lie in the hands of the alumni. It would be impossible for so large a body to agree on governing principles. I would take the position Buckley rejects: the authority as to what shall or shall not be taught should be the instructor.

McLEAN: Mr. Buckley would substitute authority of the alumni for that of the teacher. Is this an improvement? The values which he says are being taught at Yale did not occur spontaneously, but were developed over a long period of time. It would be safe to assume that many Yale graduates are also immersed in a materialistic tradition, even if under the name of individualism. Absolute power in the hands of either group can well lead to academic dictatorship.

BLESSINGTON: I think we are agreed that the alumni should not have control of a college and that the major responsibility rests with the administration.

McGINNIS: Apparently the administration feels that some accounting is due the alumni, for Mr. Buckley extracts sentences from the addresses of the university presidents in which they say Christian principles are being taught. It appears, according to Buckley, that the presidents are painting a rosy picture of affairs at the university, and so the alumni are unaware of what is truly happening at their alma mater.

McLEAN: If the administration tells its alumni that Christian principles are being fostered (provided what Buckley writes is true), it is either tragically unaware of conditions at the school or it is lying. In either case, this is a serious charge which Buckley brings against the administration.

BLESSINGTON: If Buckley's charges are true, it is fitting that he wrote the book. It is the duty of the present student.

McGINNIS: It is the inconsistencies of Buckley I object to. For instance, he tells the alumni to discontinue their financial support of Yale University until its supposed leaning toward atheism and collec-

tivism is corrected. However, in the same section, he points out that alumni contributions must continue if Yale is not to go to the national government for aid—this, of course, is collectivism at its worst.

McLEAN: I agree with this statement of Buckley's inconsistency.

McGINNIS: And now for the matter of academic freedom. In its broadest sense, academic freedom does not exist at Yale, if what Buckley says is true.

BLESSINGTON: This is a particular problem of our civilization.

McLEAN: Yes. As long as you have a civilization which drifts into atheism and immorality because of the lethargy of the people, there will be no universal standards of right and wrong and, under this mode, an atheist has just as much right to foster his views as does a believer. However, at Yale, truth and error are not given equal chance according to Buckley—at least, irreligion is given many advantages over religion. Even if truth and error are permitted to fight freely, truth will not *always* be victorious. The forces of truth certainly ought to be given equal chance.

BLESSINGTON: I do think that even a non-sectarian university can set a standard to which all must conform. Naturally, such a standard cannot be too rigid. Should a student or teacher not accept that standard, he remains free to choose another university in which to study or teach.

McGINNIS: I'll agree with that.

McLEAN: I believe that it is impossible for a modern non-sectarian college to have a standard to which everyone will conform. I cannot see the basis for such a standard.

McGINNIS: You have a point there. Our age is one of transition, and we seem to be headed towards a new social and moral order. In such a transition, there always is conflict between traditionalists and progressives, and it would be most difficult to set a standard when neither of these trends can be given undue prominence.

BLESSINGTON: We cannot abolish a standard just because people have a disinclination to follow it. The fact remains that we do have a standard of morality in our country—witness the senatorial committees which are empowered to investigate subversion and corruption in the government.

McLEAN: We, as Catholics, have an objective standard and this may be true for other religious groups, but I do not think you can argue that such a standard exists in general within social groups in this country.

MCGINNIS: There is a problem here, but I believe that a college professor has the right to teach what he believes is objective truth. I think Buckley magnifies to an unwarranted degree the fact that some professors slammed religion and morality only to make their courses more enticing.

BLESSINGTON: We cannot subscribe to complete academic freedom.

MCGINNIS: That is true. Academic freedom is not an absolute right. In certain fields, such as economics, what is right may change. However, morality does not change even though everyone may not agree as to how morality applies in a particular case.

MCLEAN: But this still does not solve the problem. Most people today do not recognize absolute values. How, then, can they have standards? I believe that you cannot force values upon a faculty if the administration does not agree on just what constitutes the standard.

MCGINNIS: Then professional competency should be the primary qualification to be looked for in the teacher. He should be able to teach his subject without thrusting his moral views upon the student. Moreover, a student ought to recognize a situation in which the professor goes off his proper subject matter.

MCLEAN: But you must remember that students are easily impressed by their teachers, and some teachers have greater capacity than others to so impress their students.

MCGINNIS: They shouldn't be, but I will admit that some are.

BLESSINGTON: Non-sectarian colleges are built upon the premise of academic freedom. If this is properly applied, then each side should have a chance to present its viewpoint. In this manner, the student ought to be able to investigate and draw his own conclusions.

MCGINNIS: I think that a professor should state his opinions as opinion and not as if they were facts. Moreover, he ought to give a short summary of the opposing arguments before making any dogmatic pronouncements.

BLESSINGTON: Your idea seems impractical. A professor will be unable to present the opposite viewpoint with conviction. I think there should be teachers for both sides.

MCGINNIS: Well, Buckley seems to say, "Teach me what I want to hear or don't teach at all."

MCLEAN: We cannot agree with that. My general view of the book is that Buckley had sufficient grounds for writing it if what he says in it is true, but I cannot agree with him as to the solutions he proposes for the problems.

BLESSINGTON: I find that statement acceptable.

MCGINNIS: I concur in this verdict.

BROTHER EDWARD PATRICK, *Associate Professor of Religion*:

The average college in the United States is secularistic in mood and atmosphere. It ignores religion because religion is supposed to be a private matter; it is supposed to be something that cannot be proved or tested in a laboratory; it is something that a man cannot be sure of; if he is sure of his religion, it is because he has faith, and having faith is a nice affair, but it isn't important.

Influential men in the average college ignore religion. If pressed for a reason, they may say quietly: "Well, anything you say about God or religion is a gratuitous statement and cannot be proved. In this respect it makes no sense, and is therefore non-sense, and as such has no importance in an institution dedicated to science."

So the professors and their students in the average college in the United States ignore religion. Frequently this is the case where originally the college was a seminary for a Protestant sect. This is the case at Yale, according to William Buckley's book.

Then there are members of the faculty in the average college who are actively scoffers at religion, who call religion and especially Christianity, ghost-fear or modern witchcraft, who regard those who are religious as superstitious and stupid. And they believe it their duty to warn their students against this sort of charlatanism. So they ridicule and laugh at religion. They strive to free their charges from the manacles of modern religious practices. They make witty remarks about religion and get their students to laugh in class and they get a reputation. Buckley says Yale has men like that.

Then there are professors in American colleges who teach courses in religion, who read the Bible and interpret it in a scholarly fashion, who have certain beliefs that are traditional and are strong for the moral law. But they are not sure about the true faith. They are not always certain what the Scriptures mean and who Jesus Christ is. They are confused about historic Christianity and the historical fact of the Church. And their students become confused also. Again, Buckley: there are men like that at Yale.

A Catholic who comes face to face with this sort of agnosticism, and antagonism, and confusion in a college like Yale is bound to react strongly if he is as alert and as intellectual as William Buckley. But he is manifesting *naïveté* if he expects a college like Yale to strengthen him in his faith and his religion. Yale doesn't promise to do that. Yale makes few promises, it would seem, but it doesn't promise a Catholic that he will find courses to make him understand and appreciate his religion.

Only a Catholic college can help a Buckley develop his religious instincts and virtues, his doctrines and practices, his culture and ideals. It is amusing to see a Catholic student calling upon a secularist college to return to its Protestant ideals. But that seems to be what William Buckley is trying to do. It is ironic to see a Catholic going to Yale and more ironic

to hear him complain that the college doesn't develop religion. What did William Buckley expect?

JAMES F. KELEHER, *Assistant Professor of Philosophy:*

The value of the book is to be found largely in the fact that the author has succeeded in getting into the arena of public discussion a chronic disease of our American way of life. That disease is, of course, the aggressive secularism to be found in all phases of our activities, including some professedly religious. The secularization of religious institutions has been proceeding intermittently but progressively for over a century, despite occasional setbacks such as that given by the Rev. Timothy Dwight at Yale, to which Mr. Buckley refers. Mr. Buckley's contribution to the problem is properly journalistic, rather than remedial. By describing actually current situations and naming current practitioners, Mr. Buckley has done his best to make it impossible for college students and their family advisers to rely on the cliché "It really isn't so bad as you are trying to make it, Father." The religious situation in non-Catholic colleges, including some professedly denominational, is, in the precise meaning of the phrase, God-awful.

Mr. Buckley does, indeed, prescribe a remedy on the basis of his verifiable diagnosis. But the intellectual ground-plan for a university which he describes as the replacement for the secularized institutions of our day is the ground-plan of most, if not all, Catholic colleges and universities in America today. Since that is the kind of education which Mr. Buckley recommends, he won't get it from the trustees, the officers, or the alumni of the secularized institutions either now or in the foreseeable future. He will get it from almost any Catholic institution. Mr. Buckley will also get, in a Catholic institution in America, regular exposure to the Papal Encyclicals on Labor. The unenlightened economic individualism which seems to be part of Mr. Buckley's personal heritage is not part of his Catholic heritage. It is, rather, part of the secularized heritage which practicing Catholics, as Catholics, reject.

ROBERT J. COURTNEY, *Assistant Professor of Government:*

The success of much of the teaching which William F. Buckley, Jr., condemns is clearly evident by a casual look at the contemporary scene: improper governmental influence is exerted to obtain loans; gifts to the right persons lessen the tax burden; there is dishonesty in relief disbursements, corruption in public enterprises, corrupt dealing between government and private corporations.

Disreputable dealings and corruption are evident at every level of government—national, state, and local. All are the result of a complete disregard for the moral law by the many, and the complacency of countless others toward this moral decadence. Once an individual rejects the truth of the moral law, anything is justifiable.

There is nothing which can mitigate the effect of the good life, which is the desire of all, more quickly than an undermining of the essential values of mankind. The current concept that belief in God is for elderly ladies and the unenlightened leads those who "really know" to cast aside this mesmerizing influence as contrary to the social welfare.

With atheistic materialism as the goal of modern man, under the aegis of the leaders of the Communist dictatorship, respect for lawful authority becomes a mere expediency. The various facets of this Marxian idea have led many non-Communists to accept this concept as their way of life. Socially-minded persons indoctrinated with a philosophy of social welfare based on expediency, and lacking moral truth, find it a simple matter to commit acts of injustice in the name of justice and social well-being.

That something should be done about this situation is clearly evident, because social justice can best be accomplished under the moral law. However, any attempt to interject the thought of God into the public school system brings the cry of "unconstitutional" from the pseudo-liberals who believe that since God cannot be non-partisan He must be banned completely from the individual's mind. Let these Church-State segregationists try to content themselves with the current results of this Godless life and its evil consequences!

The partial solution to this perplexing problem seems to lie in the non-public domain: the strengthening and expansion of the sectarian school system, a more vigorous church-school program for those who must attend the public schools, a greater recognition of vocational training in sectarian schools, and in the colleges a vigorous attempt to instill in the minds of our future leaders those values which are truth itself.

This program must be financed from non-governmental funds in order to preserve the independence of the school system so that the program may be faithfully executed. Such a condition places a burden upon those who would undertake this project, one requiring a financial sacrifice, but the moralist must be willing to make sacrifices for his cause.

What happens to academic freedom in our insistence upon teaching based on the moral law? It is preserved and strengthened, because academic freedom does not permit unbridled license to teach anything at variance with the truth and there can be no reasonable doubt of the truth of the moral law. To permit dissemination of error would find the schools in the anomalous position of helping to forge the steel of their own destruction.

JOSEPH F. HOSEY, *Instructor in English:*

I found the most interesting section of Mr. Buckley's book to be his chapter on "The Superstitions of 'Academic Freedom,'" and I have selected it for comment here. I believe it constitutes the key portion of the volume, and that his whole thesis stands or falls upon the points he makes in it. If I do not misunderstand him, he says that the concept

of academic freedom, as it is generally understood, is at best an illusion, at worst a deliberate hoax. At some point or other in the academic process truth must be distinguished from falsehood and superior values from inferior ones, and after this point has been reached it is sheer nonsense to allow anyone to teach anything false or inferior.

Now this fact is hardly contestable. The great question is not *whether* an accepted body of truths and values is to be taught, but *who* is to determine what such truths and values are. Mr. Buckley puts this function squarely into the hands of "the consumer" of education, the parents who pay the tuition and the alumni who endow the academic community: "... it must be affirmed that every citizen in a free economy, no matter the wares that he plies, must defer to the sovereignty of the consumer." Mr. Buckley wrings his hands in anguish at the thought that in education this principle ought to be followed but is not; I have for years been under the impression that it is followed but ought not to be.

The horrible fact is that the conviction that people should get what they pay for has reduced American education almost to idiocy: teachers who neither know nor respect their subjects (though they have studied "educational methods") teach arbitrarily assigned subjects to students who are not interested in learning; they then give examinations which do not in fact test anything but the students' animal cunning, and confer diplomas and grant degrees which have purely economic, not academic, value. How did such a state of things come about if the people who are paying for it do not want it?

They do want it. More accurately, they don't want anything except the diplomas and the degrees. They get them, and like to feel they've spent a certain amount of time and effort, in addition to money (our one real standard of value), in the process. What concern is it of any citizen, from the taxpayer who merely supports the public schools to the wealthy university alumnus who endows a new gymnasium, what subjects are taught in the classrooms? None at all. They are not paying for knowledge, but for the prestige and economic advantages of a degree. And that is just what they get. Mr. Buckley's naive assumption that the Yale alumni, or any other alumni for that matter, wishes specifically to see Christianity and *laissez-faire* capitalism taught in our universities, will not bear examination. The people who rule American education, at Yale or anywhere else, are in fact indifferent or hostile to religion of any kind, and *laissez-faire* economics must be supported by a mass of discredited generalizations that no longer seem to convince even its adherents, to judge by the pitch of their voices. The natural result is that religion is taught indifferently or with positive hostility, and individualistic economics not at all.

The fact is, of course, that final academic decisions ought no more to be made by students, parents, or alumni than final medical decisions ought to be made by patients or legal decisions by litigants. Such inversion does sometimes certainly occur, but at the risk of health or loss of a

lawsuit. And in the academic world as well, the "sovereignty of the consumer" can end only in anarchy and chaos. It has in fact already done so.

The variety of opinion regarding this book was expected. Obviously it has many good points and many bad ones. Both the students and the faculty seem to admire the journalistic perfection of the book and the effectiveness of its presentation. Unfortunately, this seems to be the best thing that can be said for the work.

Concerning the teaching of religion, Buckley points out that more harm is done than good in this matter. The objection of the contributors to the symposium to Buckley's chapter on religion is that he expects far too much in a non-sectarian institution. The question is raised as to why he went to Yale if he were looking for objective truth. As a Catholic, he should have sought that truth in a Catholic educational institution.

Regarding the teaching of economics, the contributors agree that there is a dangerous overemphasis on collectivism. The textbooks themselves are obviously not so dangerous; they are used in certain Catholic colleges he lists in his appendix. The objection most manifest among the contributors is the identification of individualism with Christianity. All the contributors felt that this was unwarranted.

Concerning academic control by alumni, those who expressed opinions maintained that such control was unrealistic and not to be desired.

On the problem of academic freedom, there was much disagreement with Buckley. Although all admit that the problem is a complex and difficult one, no one seemed to like Buckley's solution to it. Obviously the teacher is a vital influence in his classroom and he must follow his convictions. But the contributors feel that other viewpoints, too, should be provided. No one feels that Buckley is justified in the restrictions he would place upon the freedom of teachers. Once again, it is felt that his approach to the matter is unrealistic.

The general conclusion of this symposium is that the problems raised by Buckley do exist, but his solutions to those problems are rejected as inadequate, ineffective, and unrealistic.

● E.R.N.

The Theater in Philadelphia

Modified Rapture

• Dan Rodden

YOU MAY CALL off the hounds, sheriff. All is not lost. Just when it seemed as if the Pulitzer Prize for this season would have to be awarded, by default, to *Top Banana*; just when we thought, from all September and October indications, that we were going to have to go through the whole developmental cycle of theater again, from the *jongleurs* through the Moralities to the Interludes, the pursuit of happiness, theatrical local, found itself a proper course. I am now able to announce that the Pulitzer Committee is off the hook, and that the *jongleurs* may continue to concentrate upon starting a cycle for television. Professionalism, properly decried recently in other outlets of expression, has again reared its happy head in the theater. And theater is no amateur sport. Professional theater, while it sometimes may seem to lack the persuasive spontaneity of off-Broadway productions given plays by Garcia Lorca and e. e. cummings, has its own reassurances to offer, as I hope I can show you in what follows.

First off, that Hollywood crowd headed back for where it came from, except for Gloria Swanson, who—she now admits—should have. Such exhibitions as *Love and Let Love* and *Faithfully Yours* are only untidy memories. If I suspect the entire group of being saboteurs engaged in stealthy support of the "Movies Are Better Than Ever" campaign, I haven't a shred of proof. Suffice it that they are gone, and that, in their places, have come such old professionals as Anita Loos, John van Druten, Tennessee Williams, and Paul Osborne. If only Williams came with a whole thing of his own—an idea he'd had and a play he'd written all by himself—and if this suggests he is a playwright standing bravely alone and free among collaborators and adaptors to every side, the suggestion is perhaps not far off the mark. There is still much to be said for the other men, and Miss Loos, who had the wit to see good theater potential in what someone else had written, in another form. Miss Loos chose the novel *Gigi*, by the celebrated, if until recently untranslated, Colette. Van Druten saw in Christopher Isherwood's 1930 Berlin stories, and particularly in his character Sally Bowles, that which he thought would make for excitement. Paul Osborne, infrequently but notably represented in our theater (*On Borrowed Time*, *The Vinegar Tree*), decided there was a play in J. P. Marquand's novel, *Point of No Return*. They were all of them, it turns out, mostly right. If I have certain reservations—which I have, as you will note if you read on—I feel almost ashamed to express them after what we all went through earlier in the season.

Of Samuel Taylor, who translated Andre Roussin's *Nina* for Gloria Swanson, no more should be said, under the circumstance that Miss Swanson herself spoke the acid definitive comment immediately after its November opening here. Whereupon hundreds of people, the writer included, turned back their tickets. The whole affair was particularly unfortunate for Miss Swanson, who had obviously not read the play until, at gun's-point, she was forced to star in it. Those who did see the play report that Alan Webb was heroic amid the shambles, which would come as no surprise to anyone who had seen him, several seasons back, lend importance to an over-rated item called *The Winslow Boy*. (*NINA. A Comedy by Samuel Taylor, translated from the French of Andre Roussin, at the Walnut Street Theater.*)

GIGI. A Comedy by Anita Loos, from the Novel by Colette, at the Walnut Street Theater.

Gigi, latest in the line of Loos women, is an adolescent Parisienne, hopefully reared by her grandmother and aunt toward a career of *amour impropre*, but who bursts the bounds of impropriety by up and marrying the very same thirtyish prospect with whom they had intended making for her an alliance. If this all sounds very naughty and Frenchified, I can only assure you that it is done in elaborately good taste, with never the snap of a garter. It did disconcert me when, at the climactic point in Act Three, Gigi rose to denounce the female members of her family in such sincere and accurate tones as to cast a pall over what we had been laughing at for a good two acts. The speech—which I have a feeling was cut or deintensified prior to the New York opening, because none of the reviewers made mention of it—was clearly intended to lend a final moral tone to the whole amoral proceedings. It had the opposite effect upon me. Amoralism, in farce, should be made of much less stern stuff. We are to believe, or we are not to believe. If we are to believe, then such material as this is just not laughable. If we are willingly to suspend disbelief, then the puff-ball that is farcical amorality must suspend in middle-air, borne on the breath of laughter. Another thing bothered me a little: I am assured by a close personal friend, who spent several days in France, that the characterization of Gigi is authentic, and that a French girl of seventeen might well be so unsophisticated and middie-bloused as to have this Gigi's primary desires for licorice and for the playing of innocent card games. But the whole effect of her *naïvete*, for me, was to suggest that Congreve or Wycherley had somehow written a version of *Daddy Long-Legs*. It probably didn't bother anyone else.

Otherwise, I have no adverse comments. Audrey Hepburn, despite my misgivings as to her relative immaturity, is completely winning as Gigi, and will make a hundred-billion-trillion dollars in Hollywood. Cathleen Nesbit is admirable as her aunt, particularly in the best scene in the play, where she urges her pupil Gigi to a more rigid appreciation of the best

in rare gems. And Mr. Gilbert Miller, who produced, is clearly the best-fit man in all show business to exhibit taste in such matters as concern the customs of the continental theater, entr'acte and between-scene curtains, proper musical background, appropriate bric-a-brac, and the casting of bit-part servants. All in all, and admitting that this type of play is not my particular dish of cambric, it must still be said that, after such stupidities as *Love and Let Love*, one would be a churl not to breathe a grateful murmur of appreciation to Mr. Miller and Miss Loos and all concerned with *Gigi*.

I AM A CAMERA. A Play by John van Druten, from Stories by Christopher Isherwood, at the Forrest Theater.

Van Druten, ever since *Young Woodley* and *There's Always Juliet* and up through *Mama* and *Voice of the Turtle* and *Bell, Book and Candle* (soon to arrive here), has been one of our more literate and consistently enjoyable writers for the theater. In this, his most recent offering, he has interested himself in Christopher Isherwood's moody short stories, generally autobiographical, about Berlin in the early thirties. Mostly he was interested in Sally Bowles, a character around whom Isherwood built a certain tentative spell; around Sally Bowles, van Druten has written an arresting play. I am afraid that, for me, it was a case of arrest without conviction. I found the play intermittently absorbing, but finally defeating. I thought it achieved an invalid kind of suspense, in that it deliberately withheld its purpose until, by the final curtain, I found myself almost screaming: "But, why? Why did you write it? What's it about? What does it all mean?" Right up to curtain calls, I was sure van Druten would hook Sally's story into that larger frame of reference—Eliot's "objective correlative," if you like—that would make me know why I had been called upon to care about Sally Bowles. But he did not, and so the play defeated me. I have the same trouble with Chekhov.

I think a play roughly breaks down, in its three acts, which is the present convention—and in any case, if less conveniently—so as to answer three audience impulses: (Act I) "Why should I care?" (Act II) "Now I care!" (Act III) "Now I know why I cared!" It has been a conventional critical theory that Act II (the "Now I care!" act) is the crucial one; there was even a book, written for student playwrights of the thirties, called *How's Your Second Act?*; the implication being that if you had a good second act, you had a good play. I think this whole notion is completely invalid. "Why should I care?" involves exposition, and "Now I know why I cared!" involves resolution, and these are the playwright's toughest problems. Conflict, once we get into it, is of the essence of drama as it is of all narrative art, and it is possible to evoke momentary interest in conflict that has neither been fully exposed nor satisfactorily resolved. It is true about even the worst plays this season that the second act has invariably been the best. It is true about *I Am a Camera*. (As

supporting evidence, I once wrote a perfectly terrible play which has a splendid second act, surrounded on either side by expository windiness and final banality.)

Nothing of what I have said about *I Am a Camera* has anything to do with the performance of Julie Harris as Sally Bowles. I hope that is clear. She is—how shall I put it?—tremendous! She manages to combine the agreeable attributes of Miss Helen Hayes and Miss Tallulah Bankhead into her slim person, and the combination is irresistible. (Miss Hayes is a very fine actress who is not particularly an alluring woman, and Miss Bankhead is an alluring woman who is not much of an actress.) One of the pleasantest prospects for the American theater is that Miss Harris is so young that we can count upon seeing her for many years to come, in the varied roles her versatility promises us. In this connection, I might mention that there are other young ladies of similar promise. I think of Leora Dana, Barbara Bel Geddes, June Lockhart, and Maureen Stapleton immediately. But Uta Hagen, Jessica Tandy, Dorothy McGuire, and Celeste Holm are surely no oldsters? And Shirley Booth, who is maybe the best of the lot, is still short of forty-five. Add, so as to please everybody, the names of Cloris Leachman, Mary Welsh, Nancy Kelly, Lee Grant, and Beatrice Straight, and you must admit that things are looking up for those of us who go to the theater primarily to see girls.

To get back to *I Am a Camera*, I didn't particularly care for William Prince, who plays "I," otherwise Christopher Isherwood. Mr. Prince has a vocal device which is the natural opposite of that practice we discussed last issue—the imitation of Alfred Lunt—hereinafter known as "Lunting." If Lunting simulates a piccolo or flute in effect, Mr. Prince does something which is closer in tone to what is achieved by a French horn, or bass viol. He does this at moments when he is seeking to induce sympathy, and what he does I think we might call "Amecheing," since it is precisely the tone which Mr. Don Ameche used to adopt when telling Alice Faye that it was all right, and that she should go ahead and marry either John Payne or Tyrone Power, as the case might be. In future issues (unless a stop is put to it), look for discussions on Laughtoning, Cottoning, Garfielding, and Brandoing. Finally, in response to a question: "Does Clifton Webb Lunt?" I would say yes, he does; although I am aware that Mr. Webb would argue that it is Lunt who Webbs.

Briefly, to get back again to the play, it is a plotless sketch about a young author, Christopher Isherwood, who is living in a Berlin rooming-house about the time the Nazis showed their fists, and about Sally Bowles, a rootless English girl who lives across the hall. They share a brief, formless friendship, they drink too much when they can, they know people who are touched by racial prejudice (the sketchy sub-plot about a young Jew who would deny his heritage and a young Jewess who glories in hers is the closest the play comes to drama), and, finally, Sally goes off to Italy, unchanged and unchangeable. Chris—the passive, the camera—records the

life they have known, to be developed later. But the background—Berlin in 1930, God knows how horribly tense, and *we* know now—comes up fuzzy, and, were it not for Miss Harris' amazing vitality, even the character in the foreground would lack focus. Somehow, thanks to Julie Harris and to van Druten's occasionally wonderful dialogue, *I Am a Camera* seems better than it is, at least while you are looking at it.

One final note: as Sally is leaving Chris, van Druten has her say, "Someday, Chris, you'll write a book—a great book—one that'll sell a million copies!" This particular speech is in the great prognostic tradition of such lines as, "Someday, Franz Schubert, all Vienna will sing your music!" or, perhaps, "Just you wait, Robert Fulton! They'll see!" But under the circumstances, I found it a bit embarrassing. To Isherwood, not to me. Because I will personally eat, at high noon in Brentano's window, every copy over, say, twenty thousand that *Prater Violet*, his most successful work to date, has sold.

THE ROSE TATTOO. A Play by Tennessee Williams, at the Locust Street Theater.

There doesn't seem too much point in reminding you at this late date that Tennessee Williams is the most vigorous creative talent presently active in the American theater, nor in synopsisizing this season-old play. What does occur to me as singular is that Williams should here have written two-thirds of a better play than either *Streetcar* or *Glass Menagerie*, and then should have managed to botch the job with a third act that is unsatisfactory either from the standpoint of dramaturgy or taste. Given two lusty, driving acts that sometimes reach heights of folk comedy without recent parallel unless we mention names like Synge or O'Casey, and given performances by Eli Wallach and Maureen Stapleton, especially the former, that drive right alongside the writing, it is amazing that *The Rose Tattoo* is ultimately less than completely rewarding. By report, Williams has recognized this fact and has reworked the final act several times since the play opened. His resolution is still simultaneously grotesque and naive, and it is only because we are so grateful for his unmatched vigor that we forgive him trespasses we would consider unforgiveable in any other writer active today. The man has an uncanny ear, and a deep insight; but he has a disturbed set of values that threatens to keep him from ever writing a great play.

POINT OF NO RETURN. A Play by Paul Osborne, Based on the Novel by John P. Marquand, at the Forrest Theater.

Paul Osborne's dramatization of John P. Marquand's *Point of No Return* is the first play of the Philadelphia season to deal with a significant and challenging problem of American life. It does so in a polished, convincing and frequently brilliant manner. The acting is singularly good, the direction and production faultless. In the face of all these blessings

it may be captious to point out that the show is still, somehow, less than completely satisfying. Yet one leaves the theater feeling that in some subtle way *Point of No Return* fails to live up to its own high promise.

This is the story of Charles Gray, a young banker in desperate competition with another executive for the vice-presidency of the bank. The tension under which Gray works is carried over to his home life, and as the play opens both he and his wife are on the verge of well-bred hysteria. This tension is increased by the hero's conviction that he doesn't really want the job anyhow. For Charley Gray has, as one character observed, a "tough mind" and his fiery individualism is only partially smothered beneath the ash-grey banker's suit. How then did he (and by extension, all of us) get trapped into the toadying position modern business competition demands? In a series of flashbacks, the author reveals to us, and to Charley, that his present dilemma springs from his desire to move from the "lower upper class," in which he was raised, to the "upper upper class." His fierce desire to shed one class for another is a symptom common to American life, and the playwright, using anthropological terms, comments on it shrewdly and wittily.

But, as it turns out, this is not the only reason for Charley's predicament. The more developed and seemingly more important reason lies in a youthful love affair which ended unhappily because Jessica Lovell, his upper upperclass sweetheart, suffered from a rather severe Electra complex. Charley's competitive urge perhaps has its foundation in an unconscious desire to identify himself with Mr. Lovell by achieving his sort of financial and social success. Further psychological complications result from Charley's relationship with his own father.

All this emotional turmoil is shown to us in a kind of play within the play. Like everything else in *Point of No Return*, it is beautifully done, without, however, seeming to have much connection with the main purpose. It is beside the very point it obscures.

Pat Freudian motivation is as common and artificial a convention in our theater as the visible prop man is in the Chinese. Both conventions have value. They are convenient, easily manipulated and occasionally have a certain charm. But both are trite and superficial answers to the playwright's problem.

If we believe our modern playwrights and the concocters of television whodunits, the Electra complex occurs with the same maddening frequency as the common cold. In *Point of No Return*, the use of this convention vitiates the value of the play by plumping a psychological melodrama in the middle of a social satire. It is easy to identify ourselves with a Charley Gray caught in the web of tribal custom. It is not as easy to sympathize with his rather special malady. A universal symptom, it seems to us, should result from a universal disease. The Electra complex is not as yet, thank God, all that common.

—Joseph P. Coogan

AFTER THANKING colleague Coogan for his penetrating report on the Osborne play, I'd like to close by mentioning briefly what is coming up. After a singularly dank early December, the Philadelphia theater promises much more for the winter season. By the time you read this piece, localities will have seen *Seventeen*, reportedly a pleasant if non-historic musical. Also *Bell, Book and Candle*, the van Druten play about witchcraft in modern Manhattan, will have held the stage, along with the always capable Kaufman's latest, *Fancy Meeting You Again*. Also promised is a musical version of Victor Wolfson's admired, but unsuccessful, *Excursion*; they've retitled it *A Month of Sundays*. For many of us, the most exciting news is that we are to get, along about February, Christopher Fry's *Venus Observed*, with Rex Harrison and Lilli Palmer playing the leads. *Venus Observed* is not, I think, as good a play as his *The Lady's Not for Burning*, in the reading. But it is somewhat better constructed, and should be a delight. Mr. Fry, for the information of shut-ins, is the Britisher currently engaged in irrigating the Waste Land.

The Room Across the Hall

● James F. Martin

The open door across the hall
Bids black against the long white wall,
But yet I know a boarder's there
I've heard his footfall on the stair.

A time there was when I was ill
And saw him on my window sill,
And asked if I could visit in,
But all he did was stare and grin.

A time there was when I was well
And crossed the hall to ring the bell,
Because I wanted much to see
That misty face that looked at me.

The room may be a darkened tomb
Or filled with life like nature's womb,
What's in that room men may agree
But I shall want to wait and see.

Contributors

RILEY HUGHES, whose short story, "King of the Hill," appears herein, is a lecturer in English at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. He is Fiction Critic of *The Catholic World*, and a member of the fiction committee for the Gallery of Living Catholic Authors. His short fiction and articles have appeared in *Today*, *Commonweal*, *Spirit*, and *Renaissance*. He is represented in the recent publication, *Fifty Years of the American Novel*, by a chapter on the writing of F. Scott Fitzgerald.

HOWARD A. WILEY ("Idea vs. Symbol") is a native Philadelphian and a graduate of Dickinson College. Former Editor of the *Germantown Courier*, he is at present editorial writer for Philadelphia-Suburban Newspapers, Inc.

JOSEPH P. COOGAN, author of the short story, "Double Skull, Slow Burn, and a Ping," which appears in this issue along with his critical contribution to the *Theater in Philadelphia* section, is a graduate of La Salle College and the University of Pennsylvania. At present Instructor in English at Immaculata College, he has been a frequent contributor to *Collier's*. In addition, he has written for radio, and is co-author, with Dan Rodden, of the play *Small Beer in Springtime*. Several of his short stories have been reprinted in British periodicals.

JAMES F. MARTIN, at present a student at La Salle College, began writing verse and prose in his freshman college year. Prior to that, he had served for three years, during World War II, in the Pacific; he then spent four years in a Veterans' Administration hospital. Now following an Education course, he intends to write as well as teach.

OTHER contributions to this second issue of **FOUR QUARTERS** are by **DAN RODDEN** and **CLAUDE F. KOCH**, of the La Salle faculty. The symposium on *God and Man at Yale* was accomplished by members of the faculty and student body, under the direction of **E. RUSSELL NAUGHTON**, of the faculty. **LEO BRADY**, whose verse appeared also in the last issue, is a member of the Drama faculty of the Catholic University of America.

